

# ARE YOU A CELLULAR PHONE USER?

## **Just because you can, doesn't mean you should!**

To put it bluntly, there are appropriate times and places to make car phone calls. There are times when it isn't appropriate. Despite technical advancements, the most important element in highway safety is still you - the driver! Car phone usage involves two potentially critical driver distractions: loss of attentiveness to driving and one handed steering. A little precaution goes a long way. Make safety your priority and utilize these tips.

## **Stop and pull off the road in a safe location to make or take a call.**

This is the safest practice. New studies are showing that many vehicle accidents are caused, not by the physical holding or dialing of the phone, but by the driver's mental involvement in the conversation - attention taken away from one's crucial driving concentration. Handle your calls when your car is not in motion. Particularly if it is an intense, emotional or complex call or driving conditions are not optimal. If you insist on driving and utilizing a cellular phone at the same time, then read on.

**If driving in hazardous conditions (severe weather, heavy traffic), allow incoming calls to be picked up by a voice mailbox option.** This allows you to retrieve the message later and respond when it is safe to do so. **Don't make outgoing calls in these conditions.** Always be prepared to give driving your full attention - even if it means ending a call or not taking a call.

## **Reduce your driving speed while phoning.**

Recognize that you are distracted and allow yourself that extra distance and time to react to hazards.

Consider: it takes approximately five seconds to dial a phone. Five seconds that you are not watching for road hazards. Use your memory dialing function. OR Dial, pause, dial. You don't have to dial the number all at once. Dial a few numbers, assess the driving situation and dial a few more numbers. Then hit send.

### IN FIVE SECONDS

#### If your speed is:

#### You will travel:

35 mph

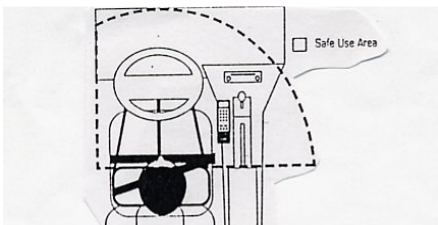
256.5 feet

55 mph

403.5 feet

65 mph

476.5 feet



## **Placement: phones and microphones.**

If you can reach your phone with your safety belt and harness securely fastened, your phone is in the *safe zone*. You should not change your driving position to dial your phone. And you should never unbuckle your seat belt to access a phone. Check out your options when making a cell phone purchase. Using a hands-free phone puts microphone placement within easy access of the driver. This is the safest and best way to use your phone (if you insist on doing so while in a moving vehicle) because you can keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road.

**Safety consideration:** If using a portable phone, consider strapping it into the passenger seat with a seat belt or securing it in some other way. A loose phone can become a dangerous projectile if you stop suddenly. Also, make sure your handset is fastened securely in the cradle when it is not in use.

**REMEMBER....Just because you can, doesn't mean you should.**  
**Be a responsible and safe cellular phone user.**